

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA by its undersigned attorneys, hereby files this Complaint and alleges upon information and belief:

JURISDICTION, STANDING, AND VENUE

- 1. This action is brought by the United States pursuant to Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), 42 U.S.C. §§ 12181 et seq., against Starline Tours of Hollywood, Inc. ("Starline").
- 2. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12188(b)(1)(B) and 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1345.
- 3. The United States is authorized to initiate this action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12188(b).
- 4. Venue in the United States District Court for the Central District of California is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b).

DEFENDANT

- 5. Defendant Starline is a privately owned and operated company located in Los Angeles, California. Starline provides tours and operates tour buses and charter shuttles to major attractions in Hollywood and the greater Los Angeles area. Starline offers more than thirty different tours and serves approximately one million passengers a year.
- 6. Upon information and belief, Starline is a public accommodation that owns, leases, leases to, or operates a terminal, depot, or other station used for specified public transportation within the meaning of 42 U.S.C. §§ 12181(7)(G) and 12181(10), and Title III's implementing regulations, 28 C.F.R. § 36.104 and 49 C.F.R. § 37.3. Upon information and belief, Starline is also a public accommodation that owns, leases, leases to, or operates a rental or sales establishment within the meaning of 42 U.S.C. § 12181(7)(E), and Title III's implementing regulation, 28 C.F.R. § 36.104.

- 7. Starline, with respect to some of its operations, is a private entity primarily engaged in the business of transporting people, whose operations affect commerce and which provides specified public transportation services, 42 U.S.C. § 12184; 49 C.F.R. § 37.103. Starline, with respect to other of its operations, is a private entity that provides specified public transportation services and is not primarily engaged in the business of transporting people. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(B), (C), (D); 49 C.F.R. § 37.101.
- 8. Starline operates a fixed route system or systems within the meaning of 42 U.S.C. §§ 12181(4) and 49 C.F.R. § 37.3. In particular, Starline offers "Hop-on, Hop-off" sightseeing tours that feature double-decker tour buses with both live and recorded narration identifying landmarks and other points of interest. The "Hop-on, Hop-off" sightseeing tours include more than fifty stops in four separate but interconnected loops including, inter alia, Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Santa Monica, Universal City, and downtown Los Angeles. Starline operates approximately thirty-eight "Hop-on, Hop-off" daily tours. On information and belief, a significant percentage of Starline's "Hop-on, Hop-off tour" vehicles are not accessible to individuals who use wheelchairs.
- 9. Starline also operates a demand-responsive system or systems within the meaning of 42 U.S.C. §§ 12181(3) and 49 C.F.R. 37.3, in that Starline offers tours and transportation services that do not have a fixed route, fixed times, or fixed stops, or fixed durations.
- 10. Starline has failed to provide tour buses or other tour vehicles which are accessible to and usable by people with disabilities who use wheelchairs within the meaning of Title III and its implementing regulations, 49 C.F.R. pt 37 and 49 C.F.R. pt. 38, thereby excluding such persons from Starline's services. Starline has also failed to provide demand responsive service to individuals with disabilities that is equivalent to that provided to individuals without disabilities. 42

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U.S.C. § 12182(b)(1)(C); 49 C.F.R. § 37.101(d). Starline therefore violated the ADA by failing to afford people with disabilities who use wheelchairs, on the basis of their disability, the opportunity to participate in or benefit from the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations afforded to other individuals. Further, Starline failed to provide appropriate training to its employees regarding its legal obligations under relevant federal statutes and regulations, in violation of the ADA. 49 C.F.R. § 37.173. Upon information and belief, Starline's violations of the ADA are continuing.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- affecting the muscles and heart that causes nervous system damage and movement problems. Friedreich's Ataxia typically begins in childhood and leads to impaired muscle coordination that gradually worsens over time. Ms. Champlin's condition has necessitated her use of an electric wheelchair for mobility. Ms. Champlin is substantially limited in the major life activity of walking and the major bodily function of the nervous system, and is an individual with a disability within the meaning of the ADA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12102(1), (2); 28 C.F.R. § 36.104.
- 12. In or about July 2010, Ms. Champlin telephoned Starline and requested information about scheduling a tour during her upcoming visit to Los Angeles to attend the Annual Membership Meeting of the National Ataxia Foundation in March 2011. Starline personnel informed Ms. Champlin that individuals who use wheelchairs could only take a tour if they were able to walk onto the bus and then collapse their wheelchairs.
- 13. On August 14, 2010, Ms. Champlin sent Starline a letter in which she reiterated her request for accessible tours for herself and others attending the Annual Membership Meeting of the National Ataxia Foundation and

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referred Starline to requirements of the ADA. Ms. Champlin did not receive any response to her letter.

- 14. In early January 2011, another member of the National Ataxia Foundation planning to attend the Annual Membership Meeting in Los Angeles contacted Starline about wheelchair accessible tours and was informed that Starline had just acquired a new accessible vehicle. Several members therefore renewed their efforts to book accessible tours during their visit to Los Angeles in March 2011.
- 15. On January 13, 2011, Ms. Champlin sent an email to Starline in which she requested information on Starline's policies about persons using wheelchairs. In response, Ms. Champlin received an email from Starline stating that Starline had accessible vehicles available for all of its tours, conditioned on advance notice of five or twenty-four hours, depending upon the tour.
- Starline in which she stated that she would be giving more than two months notice and asked for more specific information about the vehicles, such as the number of tie-down spots for wheelchairs and the ability to accommodate additional passengers who could transfer from their wheelchairs to vehicle seats. In response, Ms. Champlin received an email from Starline stating that only three of Starline's tours (Tour #1, Tour #2, and Tour #25) were accessible to persons using a wheelchair and that Starline had a total of three accessible vehicles, each of which could tie down two wheelchairs and could accommodate additional passengers able to transfer to a seat and collapse their wheelchairs. Eventually, Ms. Champlin and several other members of the National Ataxia Foundation were able to book a Starline Tour for March 17, 2011, and purchased reservations that specified that an accessible vehicle would be provided.

- 17. On the evening of March 16, 2011, Ms. Champlin and other members of the National Ataxia Foundation confirmed with Starline their reservation of a wheelchair accessible, lift-equipped vehicle for the tour purchased for the next day, March 17, 2011, which was to pick them up at their hotel at 7:30 a.m.
- 18. On the morning of March 17, 2011, Starline sent a vehicle that was not wheelchair accessible to pick up Ms. Champlin and her companions at their hotel. The Starline driver then suggested to Ms. Champlin and the other individuals using wheelchairs that they walk onto the bus and stow their wheelchairs.
- 19. One of Ms. Champlin's companions contacted Starline, which stated that a different vehicle, which was wheelchair accessible, would be sent to pick them up for the tour.
- 20. The replacement vehicle did not arrive until 11:30 a.m., four hours after the scheduled start of the tour purchased by Ms. Champlin and her companions. After the group engaged in a thirty minute process to board the vehicle, tie-down two wheelchairs, and stow an additional wheelchair, the vehicle would not start. The driver informed the passengers that the particular vehicle was very rarely used and that it had been experiencing difficulties before he picked up the passengers. The driver also informed the passengers that he had been instructed to keep them on the vehicle until another replacement vehicle was sent.
- 21. Ms. Champlin and her companions waited in the non-functioning vehicle for an additional two hours, in considerable discomfort, but another replacement vehicle did not arrive. Eventually, they disembarked from the vehicle and relinquished their plan to take a tour while visiting Los Angeles.
- 22. The United States is informed and believes that Starline owns or leases approximately ninety vehicles, the solicitations for purchase or lease of

which were after August 25, 1990, five of which are readily accessible to or usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs in that, inter alia, they are equipped with a level-change mechanism or boarding device. However, on information and belief, three of the five accessible vehicles are more than ten years old and not all of the vehicles are currently, or consistently, in operable condition.

- 23. The United States is informed and believes that Starline has instituted a policy of providing accessible vehicles for its demand responsive tours upon forty-eight hours advance notice. Starline does not require forty-eight hours advance notice for non-accessible vehicles. Notwithstanding its forty-eight hours notice policy, Starline has, in repeated instances, informed members of the public that accessible vehicles were not available or were available only under extremely limited circumstances, even where reservations were made far in advance. Likewise, the United States is informed and believes that Starline repeatedly has failed to provide an accessible vehicle for its demand responsive tours despite notice in accordance with its policy.
- 24. Starline's actions constitute a pattern or practice of discrimination or raise an issue of general public importance within the meaning of 42 U.S.C. § 12188(b)(1)(B) and 28 C.F.R. § 36.503.
- 25. Upon information and belief, Starline's actions caused harm to Amy Champlin and her companions, including but not limited to emotional distress, and continue to cause harm to other similarly situated individuals with disabilities.

Violations of Title III of the ADA

26. The United States incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 25.

- 27. Starline is in violation of Title III of the ADA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12181-12189, by discriminating against individuals with disabilities, on the basis of disability, in the full and equal enjoyment of Starline's goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a); 28 C.F.R. § 36.201(a).
- 28. Starline's violations of Title III include but are not limited to the following:
- a. denying individuals who use wheelchairs the opportunity to participate in or benefit from Starline's goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations, 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(1)(A)(i); 28 C.F.R. § 36.202(a);
- b. affording to individuals who use wheelchairs a good, service, facility, privilege, advantage, or accommodation that is not equal to that afforded to other individuals, 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(1)(A)(ii); 28 C.F.R. § 36.202(b);
- c. failing to provide Starline's goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of individuals who use wheelchairs, 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(1)(B); 28 C.F.R. § 36.203;
- d. imposing or applying eligibility criteria that screen out or tend to screen out individuals who use wheelchairs from fully and equally enjoying the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations where such criteria are not necessary for the provision of Starline's goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations, 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(i); 28 C.F.R. § 36.301;
- e. purchasing or leasing a vehicle or vehicles with a seating capacity in excess of 16 passengers for use on Starline's fixed route tours that are

1 not readily accessible to and usable by individuals who use wheelchairs, 42 U.S.C. 2 § 12182(b)(2)(B)(i); 49 C.F.R. §§ 37.7, 37.101; 49 C.F.R. pt 38; 3 f. purchasing or leasing a vehicle or vehicles with a seating 4 capacity of 16 passengers or less for use on Starline's fixed route tours that are not 5 readily accessible to and usable by individuals who use wheelchairs, and failing to б operate its fixed route tours so as to ensure a level of service to individuals with 7 disabilities equivalent to that provided to individuals without disabilities, 42 U.S.C. 8 § 12182(b)(2)(B)(ii); 49 C.F.R. §§ 37.7, 37.101, 37.105; 49 C.F.R. pt 38; 9 g. purchasing or leasing a vehicle or vehicles with a seating 10 capacity in excess of 16 passengers for use on Starline's demand responsive 11 system that are not readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities 12 and operating such system so that, when viewed in its entirety, such system does 13 not ensure a level of service to individuals who use wheelchairs equivalent to the 14 level of service provided to individuals without disabilities, 42 U.S.C.§§ 15 12182(B)(2)(C)(i), (ii); 49 C.F.R. §§ 37.7, 37.101, 37.105; 49 C.F.R. pt 38; and 16 h. discriminating against individuals who use wheelchairs in the 17 full and equal enjoyment of specified public transportation with respect to those 18 aspects of Starline's business that primarily involve transporting people, 42 U.S.C. 19 § 12184; 49 C.F.R. pts 37 and 38. 20 21 // 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the United States prays for relief as follows:

- A. Declare that the discriminatory practices of Defendant, as set forth above, violate Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12181-89, and the U.S. Department of Justice's implementing regulations, 28 C.F.R. pt. 36, and the U.S. Department of Transportation's implementing regulations, 28 C.F.R. pts. 37 and 38;
- B. Enjoin Defendant, its officers, agents, and employees, and all other persons in active concert or participation with the defendant from discriminating on the basis of disability against any individual seeking transportation services;
- C. Order Defendant to bring its fixed route and demand responsive tours, and its operations that are primarily engaged in the business of transporting people, into compliance with Title III of the ADA, including applicable implementing regulations by the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Transportation;
- D. Order Defendant to develop and implement a plan to train its employees to properly assist and treat individuals with disabilities in a respectful and courteous way;
- E. Award monetary damages to Amy Champlin and other similarly situated persons who have been discriminated against by Defendant to compensate them for injuries resulting from such discrimination;

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1	F. Assess a civil penalty in an amount authorized by 42 U.S.C. §								
2	12188(b)(2)(C) against the defendant to vindicate the public interest; and								
3	G. Order such other appropriate relief as the interests of justice may								
4	require.								
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6	A JURY TRIAL IS DEMANDED.								
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11	Dated: fry 12, 2012 Respectfully submitted,								
12	J. E. W.								
13	THOMAS E. PEREZ								
14	Assistant Attorney General Civil Rights Division								
15									
16	ANDRÉ BIROTTE JR. United States Attorney								
17	LEON W. WEIDMAN								
18	Assistant United States Attorney Chief, Civil Division								
19	Cinei, Civii Division								
20	DODAY A AND L WON MONTHER FOND								
21	ROBYN-MARIE LYON MONTELEONE Assistant United States Attorney								
22	Assistant Division Chief								
23	Civil Rights Unit Chief, Civil Division								
24	Attorneys for Plaintiff								
25	United States of America								
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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

NOTICE OF ASSIGNMENT TO UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE FOR DISCOVERY

This case has been assigned to	District Judge Gary A.	Feess and the as	signed discovery
Magistrate Judge is Charles Eick.			

The case number on all documents filed with the Court should read as follows:

CV12- 6120 GAF (Ex)

Pursuant to General Order 05-07 of the United States District Court for the Central District of California, the Magistrate Judge has been designated to hear discovery related motions.

All discovery related mo	otions should be notice	ed on the calend	lar of the Magistrate	Judge

NOTICE TO COUNSEL

A copy of this notice must be served with the summons and complaint on all defendants (if a removal action is filed, a copy of this notice must be served on all plaintiffs).

Subsequent documents must be filed at the following location:

[X]	Western Division 312 N. Spring St., Rm. G-8 Los Angeles, CA 90012	Southern Division 411 West Fourth St., Rm. 1-053 Santa Ana, CA 92701-4516	Ц	Eastern Division 3470 Twelfth St., Rm. 134 Riverside, CA 92501

Failure to file at the proper location will result in your documents being returned to you.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL COVER SHEET

I (a) PLAINTIFFS (Check box if you are representing yourself □) UNITED STATES OF AMERICA				FENDAN STARLIN		HOLLYV	VOOD, INC., a bus	siness entity,		: :
(b) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address and Telephone Number. If you are representing yourself, provide same.) Thomas E. Perez, Assist. Atty General, CV Rights Div See Attachment 1					•		Firm, 2100 North I 714-245-2480	Broadway Suite	300	
II. BASIS OF JURISDICTIO	N (Place an X in one box only.)	III			INCIPAL PAR or plaintiff and		For Diversity Cases efendant.)	Only		
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AFTER COMPLETING THE FRONT SIDE OF FORM CV-71, COMPLETE THE INFORMATION REQUESTED BELOW.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: Case Number:

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT, CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL COVER SHEET

VIII(a). IDENTICAL CASES: Has If yes, list case number(s):	this action been pro	eviously filed in this court and	d dismissed, remanded or closed? ★□ No □ Yes			
VIII(b). RELATED CASES: Have If yes, list case number(s): <u>CV 11-0</u>	any cases been pre 2620-JFW (CWx	viously filed in this court that	t are related to the present case? □ No			
⊠ B. (□ C.	Arise from the same Call for determinati For other reasons w Involve the same pa	e or closely related transaction on of the same or substantially ould entail substantial duplica ttent, trademark or copyright,	y related or similar questions of law and fact; or ation of labor if heard by different judges; or and one of the factors identified above in a, b or c also is present.			
(a) List the County in this District; Check here if the government, it	California County o s agencies or emplo	utside of this District; State if yees is a named plaintiff. If t	f other than California; or Foreign Country, in which EACH named plaintiff resides. this box is checked, go to item (b).			
County in this District:*			California County outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country			
Los Angeles						
			f other than California; or Foreign Country, in which EACH named defendant resides. f this box is checked, go to item (c).			
County in this District:*			California County outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country			
Los Angeles						
(c) List the County in this District; Note: In land condemnation ca			f other than California; or Foreign Country, in which EACH claim arose.			
County in this District:*			California County outside of this District; State, if other than California; or Foreign Country			
Los Angeles						
* Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernar			and yes Otispo Counties			
Note: In land condemnation cases, us X. SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY (tract of land involved	Date 7/16/17			
or other papers as required by lav	v. This form, approv	ed by the Judicial Conference	mation contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings to of the United States in September 1974, is required pursuant to Local Rule 3-1 is not filed ing the civil docket sheet. (For more detailed instructions, see separate instructions sheet.)			
Key to Statistical codes relating to So	cial Security Cases:					
Nature of Suit Code	Abbreviation	Substantive Statement of	Cause of Action			
861	ніа	All claims for health insurance benefits (Medicare) under Title 18, Part A, of the Social Security Act, as amended. Also, include claims by hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, etc., for certification as providers of services under the program. (42 U.S.C. 1935FF(b))				
862	BL	All claims for "Black Lung" benefits under Title 4, Part B, of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. (30 U.S.C. 923)				
863	DIWC	All claims filed by insured workers for disability insurance benefits under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended; plus all claims filed for child's insurance benefits based on disability. (42 U.S.C. 405(g))				
863	DIWW	All claims filed for widows Act, as amended. (42 U.S.	s or widowers insurance benefits based on disability under Title 2 of the Social Security (C. 405(g))			
864	SSID	All claims for supplementa Act, as amended.	al security income payments based upon disability filed under Title 16 of the Social Security			
865	RSI	All claims for retirement (o U.S.C. (g))	old age) and survivors benefits under Title 2 of the Social Security Act, as amended. (42			

CV-71 (05/08)

1 ATTACHMENT 1 2 3 4 THOMAS E. PEREZ 5 Assistant Attorney General Civil Rights Division 6 7 ANDRÉ BIROTTE JR. 8 United States Attorney LEON W. WEIDMAN Assistant United States Attorney 10 Chief, Civil Division ROBYN-MARIE LYON MONTELEONE (State Bar No. 130005) 11 Assistant United States Attorney 12 Assistant Division Chief Civil Rights Unit Chief, Civil Division 13 JESSICA O. CHEH (State Bar No. 254012) 14 Assistant United States Attorney Federal Building, Suite 7516 15 300 North Los Angeles Street 16 Los Angeles, California 90012 17 Telephone: (213) 894-2458/0886 (213) 894-7819 Facsimile: 18 robby.monteleone@usdoj.gov E-mail: 19 jessica.cheh@usdoj.gov 20 Attorneys for Plaintiff United States of America 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28